

## INFORMATION REPORT INFORMATION REPORT

## CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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COUNTRY Czechoslovakia

REPORT

SUBJECT Special Study of Czech Border  
Security Measures

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SOURCE EVALUATIONS ARE DEFINITIVE. APPRAISAL OF CONTENT IS TENTATIVE.

1. Organization of a Border Guard Brigade. A brigade is sub-divided into four or five battalions; each battalion into five companies. Companies are not sub-divided into tactical platoons. Brigades are usually commanded by a major or a lieutenant colonel; battalions are usually commanded by a captain. Examples of Czech unit designations are as follows: 4. Brigade pohranicni straze (4th Border Guard Brigade), 4. Prapor Hrusovani (4th Border Guard Battalion Hrusovani), and 16. Rota (16th Border Guard Company). The numerical designations of the companies are assigned consecutively as stationed along the border by the brigade, not by the battalion. The commonly used designations of units are merely geographical, thus the 16th Company of the 4th Brigade is "PS - utvar - Jaroslavice" (Border Guard Unit - Jaroslavice). The numerical designation is only used in internal communications. In addition, units also have cover names often derived from the description of their headquarters, e.g., Forester's hut. [REDACTED]

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2. Organization of a Border Guard Company. On the Austrian border, a company is usually assigned to guarding a sector of from eight to 12 kilometers. The strength of a border guard company is between 40 and 50 men, about the strength of a platoon in the Czech Army. Usually a company is commanded by a first lieutenant. There are usually one or two lieutenants and one warrant officer or one lieutenant and two warrant officers assigned to each company. These officers are on duty in rotation. The deputy commander in each company is also the political officer. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] There are three groups within a company:

- a. Special group (specialni druzstvo). This is a small group usually

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INFORMATION REPORT INFORMATION REPORT

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Page 2

consisting of three dog handlers with their German shepherds and a radio operator. This group is supposed to retire in the event of attack to reach reinforcements and maintain communications with the front line. This group has a radio set with earphones, the counterpart of which is in the company headquarters.

- b. Reserve group. This group usually consists of two cooks, two horsemen, one stableman (who drives the horse-drawn supply wagon) and a clerk. The horsemen usually serve as ammunition and supply NCOs as well.
- c. Defense group (Obrane druzstvo). This is the main body of the men in the company, who are under the direct command of the officer-on-duty.

The duty officers relieve each other every five days. They are on duty 24 hours a day from 1900 to 1900. The duty officer remains at company headquarters while on duty except for occasional inspection tours, usually about twice a day. At all times one of the three duty sergeants, who rotate every 12 hours, is on duty in the headquarters building. The rest of the men are assigned to guard posts or patrol activity. Their daily schedule is: eight hours duty, three hours training, seven hours sleep and the rest of the time free.

- 3. Guard Duty. Guard post duty or patrol duty is always done in pairs. The senior of the two men carries a machine pistol and the other a carbine. Dog handlers always carry a machine pistol. Horse patrols are usual only in the "border zone" (see paragraph (4b)). Sometimes, however, the duty officer inspects the guard posts and the plowed strips on horseback. Before a border guard begins his tour of duty he has to turn in his military identification card to the duty sergeant and only receives it again on the completion of his duty. The senior guardsmen and the officers seem to be particularly interested in establishing contact [redacted] and try particularly to engage in conversation [redacted] farmers, foresters, hunters, wood cutters and others who live in the border area. There are several different types of guard activity: 25X1

- a. Permanent Guard Posts. These are specific points or beats that are manned by two guards at all times day and night. The men on duty are usually relieved three or sometimes five times a day at irregular hours. There are usually about four such permanent guard posts within each sector. Sometimes these guards use an observation tower during the daylight hours. Often there is such a guard post at the point where one sector adjoins another. In this case, the guarding of the post is rotated every two weeks between the two companies involved. 25X1
- b. Nocturnal Guard Posts. There are usually two assigned beats per sector which are manned only during the night, in addition to the regular daytime watches. Usually this duty consists of some patrolling and some time spent in manning outposts.
- c. Occasional Guard Posts. These guard posts are sometimes a watchtower which is manned only during the daylight hours. They can be seasonal, depending on the density of the foliage or the fact that the water level of a border stream is particularly low and extra guards are indicated. Sometimes these guards patrol an area near a path or wire-crossing point. They usually seem to have a fixed point from which they fan out. At their fixed point there is often a telephone affixed to a tree so that they can communicate with company headquarters. Sometimes men are seen mounting a "standing patrol", i.e., standing back-to-back thus surveying both sides of the border, the senior of the two facing Austria.
- d. Watchtower Guard Duty. Watchtowers are always manned by two men at a time. The roster for this duty is posted daily in the headquarters and only some of the towers (of which there are from four to nine in a sector) are manned on any particular day. Some of the towers are seldom used. The towers are never manned at night.

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Page 3

4. Border Area. Within the general area of the border there are two zones which are controlled by different regulations:

a. Forbidden Zone. According to information dated March 1956, this area is two kilometers in depth from the border (not the barbed wire). According to this information, no one is permitted in this area (other than border guards) who is not in possession of a special pass valid for one year, issued by the local authorities. Other information dated January 1957 differs somewhat, in that the "Forbidden zone" is described as varying between two and six kilometers in depth, depending on the terrain, and states that persons may not travel around in this area if they are not accompanied by a member of the border guard forces. Civilians must have a pass issued by the appropriate brigade headquarters and the company must be informed that such a pass has been issued, since the company is responsible for providing escorts. Civilians may not be on the [ ] side of the barbed-wire fence, except for woodcutters and harvesters who are escorted by border guard personnel. If a civilian is encountered in the vicinity of the barbed wire the procedure is for the guard to call "Halt"; if this order is disobeyed, the guard is to fire a warning shot, and if the civilian still does not halt, then the guard may shoot. Wherever possible the guard is to try to wound the civilian, preventing his escape, rather than attempt to kill the person. In the case of civilians on the far side of the barbed wire but still on Czechoslovak territory, the guard is supposed to aim his shots parallel to the border, to avoid firing into [ ] territory. Most of the houses in this area have been demolished. 25X1

b. Border Zone. This is an area which, depending on the terrain, extends from six to 12 kilometers inland from the border. Persons who are not residents of the area must have a permit to enter the area issued by the security police of their home area, these permits are usually valid for three weeks. In addition to the permit, the issuance of the permit must be noted in the person's identification document on page 14 or 20. This area is patrolled by the border guard. There are usually very few civilians living in the "border zone", and most of the men are members of the PPS or auxiliary border guard units. All residents must have a special border guard stamp in their identification cards permitting them to be in the area.

5. Technical Border Security Measures. 25X1

- a. Plowed Strips. The plowed strips are 12 meters wide and are about three meters from the barbed-wire fences on the outside [ ]. They are kept freshly plowed, except in winter, when a clear snow strip can be maintained.
- b. Barbed-Wire Entanglements. There are three rows of wire, spaced about three meters apart. In each row, the posts are three meters from each other. The outer rows of posts are about 120 centimeters in height; the center row about 160 centimeters in height. Barbed wire is stretched horizontally and diagonally (between the tops and bottoms at posts) in each row and diagonally and horizontally between the rows as well as zig-zag between the posts of one row and the next post in line on an adjoining row, thus ensuring a complete net through which only a rabbit could pass. In addition there are five rows of electrified barbed wire running horizontally between the posts of the center row, and a few connections to the outer rows. The current varies from 300 to 3,000 volts. Moving any of the wires usually contacts an electrified wire, which sets off an alarm in the headquarters building. There are switches located near the gates through the barbed wire which can be turned off using a long bakelite cane. The current may not be turned off, nor may the gate be used except by an officer, or in his presence. The current cannot be turned on again except at the same spot. More recent information indicates that in most places the switches have been removed and the current can now only be turned off at the headquarters building. A soldier who must pass through

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Page 4

the barbed-wire entanglements first telephones to headquarters and then carefully tests to see whether the current is really off before using the gates.

- c. Trip Wires. There are about 70 trip wires or warning wires set up in any one sector; they are about 100 to 150 meters long and are scattered between two and 30 meters inside the barbed-wire fences. They are connected to signal flares of different colors, so that when they go off the guards know where to run to. There is no design to the color scheme, but each guard is responsible for seeing that the flares are attached in his areas and that his replacement knows their whereabouts. These warning wires are also attached to the top of the gates passing through the barbed wire; they are carefully detached before the gates are opened officially. A recent report indicates that there is now a series of low-lying trip wires about 20 centimeters from the ground, just before the barbed wire entanglements on the Czechoslovak side; these carry an electric current and sound an alert at headquarters, but do not alarm the person who activates them.
  - d. Tunnels under the Barbed-Wire Entanglements. In a sector there are as many as nine underground passages, or tunnels under the barbed-wire fences. They are not usually discernible from the distance. At each side of the barbed wire there is a trip door approach to the tunnel which is carefully camouflaged with grass sod or earth. The shaft, with steps or a ladder, is reinforced with pit props or lengths of wood. The trapdoors are about one meter square in size, and the shafts are also about one meter square in cross-section. The shafts are about 150 centimeters deep. The tunnels, which are reinforced with pit props and fitted out with tiles on the floor and a wooden roof, are about 150 centimeters in height, 180 centimeters in width and about five meters long. The trapdoors are locked with padlocks hanging inside of the trapdoors. There is a small square hole covered by a piece of rubber through which one has to reach to lock, or unlock, the padlock. There are only two keys to each padlock, and the padlocks on the two trapdoors are always different, thus a set of two keys is needed for each tunnel. One is always kept at the headquarters building and one is normally held by the guard in whose area the tunnel lies, or is issued to a guard having to use the tunnel. Normally guards use the tunnels when supervising workers on the far side of the barbed wire. The workers, civilians, assigned to repair work, wood cutting, or plowing the strips, enter and leave the area beyond the barbed-wire fences by the gates, sometimes even moving wagons through the gates.
  - e. Box-Like Passageways. During 1957, it was noted for the first time that in marshy, low-lying area a new type of passageway was being used by guards. These are wooden boxes, placed flat on the ground, extending from one side of the barbed-wire entanglements to the other, and about 80 x 80 centimeters in cross-section. These boxes are locked at each end, covered with tarpaper, and often camouflaged with branches or covered with sod.
6. Border Guard Security Procedures.
- a. Code Words and Identification Procedures. A pair of code words is assigned by the battalion for all of the units in that area: the first is a city, the second a military article. These code words are valid for 24 hours, from 1900 to 1900. Guards whose duty period will overlap are told the new as well as the old code words. The identification procedure between inspecting officer and guard on duty is as follows: a guard on duty will allow the newcomer to approach quite closely then he will command: "Halt! Identify yourself!" (Stoj! Svolany!). The officer will state that he is the inspecting officer and will then step up to three feet from the guard. The guard will then say, "Password!" (Heslo) and the officer may respond, "Bratislava", whereupon the guard may say, "Armored car".
  - b. Slipping Persons through the Barbed Wire. This happens quite often in any sector; the persons are usually slipped through the tunnels, and sometimes even vehicles are slipped through the gates. It always happens at night and the procedure is roughly this: one of the officers or even the ranking NCO, if he is in temporary command, approached the barbed wire in the company

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Page 5

of one or two civilians and instructs the guard or patrol to leave the area. Sometimes, less often, the guard is warned by telephone that the officer is coming, and that he should be particularly cautious about accosting him. In any case, there are no guards around when persons are slipped through the barbed wire.

- c. **Interlopers** [ ] Persons approaching the barbed-wire fences [ ] 25X1  
[ ] are intercepted as quickly as possible by the guards 25X1  
going through the nearest gate or tunnel. The guards have been instructed  
to use the German commands "Halt! Hände hoch!" (Halt! Hands up!) on  
the [ ] side of the barbed wire. Anyone apprehended is given a cursory  
body search, has his hands bound behind him and is blindfolded. He is  
then taken through the tunnel or gate to company headquarters before the  
blindfold is removed. The guards call for reinforcement if more than one  
person is taken into custody. If the guard does not have time to  
cross the fences, he accosts the stranger from the Czech side of the wire.  
If the person does not halt as instructed the guard must use his weapon.  
In practice, nobody is accosted until he crosses the plowed strip because  
the guard does not want to be **reprimanded** for shooting and missing.
- d. A person seen moving about without escort in the "forbidden zone" on the  
Czech side of the wire is stopped, searched thoroughly and taken to  
company headquarters. If anyone tries to flee, he is to be stopped by  
force of arms. Usually there is one detention cell at each company  
headquarters. Arrested persons are transferred as soon as possible  
to battalion headquarters.
7. **Communications Facilities.** Along the barbed-wire fences about two meters inside  
the fence there is usually a footpath used by the guards on patrol duty. Near  
these footpaths, about every 200 to 250 meters are wooden posts about 50  
centimeters high outfitted with telephone jacks. The jacks are covered to  
protect them from the weather. There are other such telephone connections  
on both sides of the barbed wire attached to trees, ruined buildings, etc.  
Each guard on patrol carries a small telephone (about the size of an "egg  
hand grenade") with two collapsible arms holding the ear and mouth pieces.  
When the telephone is plugged into the jack the connection to the headquarters  
switchboard is immediate and guard and duty sergeant identify themselves by  
their serial numbers. The guard merely indicates his general locality; the  
duty sergeant can then identify the exact location from the switchboard chart.  
The headquarters switchboard can call the guard by pressing a buzzer which  
causes a bell to ring on three adjacent posts; if there is no answer, the  
duty sergeant presses the buzzer for the next set of posts. Similar telephone  
jacks are installed in watchtowers and observation posts.
8. Apparently each company has its own telephone circuit, since companies cannot  
be connected to each other except through the battalion switchboard. Connection  
to the regular civilian circuit is only possible through the brigade switch-  
board. Apparently even though there is no direct connection to the civilian  
telephone net, the electric power for the company telephone network is  
derived from the civilian power lines.
9. There is no telegraphic communication at company level, nor is there any  
radio communication. However, each company has a radio receiver and trans-  
mitter unit for emergencies. There are radio communications and teletype  
facilities at battalion headquarters.
10. There is also a system of flare signals to be used when the telephone circuit  
is not functioning, or when it cannot be used for some other reason. At night  
the flare pistols are also used to flood-light an area. The pistol is carried  
by the senior member of the guard patrol and he carries the different colored  
cartridges. The code system of colors is varied each day; one, two and even  
three colored light signals have been seen. A red rocket discharged at the  
company headquarters is a signal for all patrols to report in.

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Page 6

11. Miscellaneous Observations. In the late summer and early fall of 1957, in one sector the construction of a small concrete cupola flanked by two wooden boxes was noted; in another sector the burying of a concrete pipe and cables was observed. Both were near passageways through the barbed wire, and may contain switches for controlling the current at these passageways, although the function of these new installations has not been clarified.

12. [redacted] report in German from which the present report was extracted. One photograph showing the border obstacles on the Czech-Austrian border and two sketches of the border obstacles are also included in the report.

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CZECHOSLOVAKIA

BORDER OBSTACLES AT CZECH-AUSTRIAN BORDER.

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